


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	BT	Date:	28/4/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	28.4.26
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Application Ref:	3/2026/0053			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk</small>
Date Inspected:	18/2/26	Site Notice:	18/2/26	
Officer:	BT			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed re-roofing and extension to farm building.
Site Address/Location:	Cow Ark Farm, Clitheroe Road, Whitwell, BB7 3DF.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Bowland Forest (Lower division) Parish Council:	Objections raised with regards to the impact of the proposal upon residential amenity, visual amenity, highway safety, the ecology of the area and flood risk.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objections.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
<p>Three objections have been received in relation to the proposal which are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the proposal upon residential amenity • Impact of the proposal upon visual amenity • Impact of the proposal upon highway safety • Impact of the proposal upon the ecology of the area <p>Concerns have also been raised with regards to the impact of the proposal upon water pressure function in the area however this issue does not form the basis of a material planning consideration and as such cannot be assessed as part of this application.</p>	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
<p>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</p> <p>Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development Key statement EN2: Landscape Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>
Relevant Planning History:

3/2016/0683:

Application to vary condition 4 (roof construction and materials) on of planning permission 3/2005/0598 for new farmyard, buildings and access (Refused)

3/2009/1023:

Application for the discharge of condition no. 4 (materials), no. 5 (number of rooflights), no. 6 (arrangement of rooflights) and no. 7 (replacement windows) of planning consent 3/2007/0919P. Listed Building Consent (Approved)

3/2009/1022:

Application for the discharge of condition no. 4 (materials), no. 5 (number of rooflights), no. 6 (arrangement of rooflights) and no. 7 (replacement windows) of planning consent 3/2007/0919P (Approved)

3/2007/0919:

Extension to existing house and installation of below ground pipework for ground source heat pump. Site area 1.25ha. Re-submission (Approved)

3/2007/0918:

Reinstatement of the house to its original 18th century layout. Proposed extension with a glass link to provide a lounge, lift, disabled bathroom and ground floor bedrooms. Internal rearrangement to provide a family kitchen, a bathroom and bedrooms and alterations to the main staircase (Approved)

3/2007/0426:

Reinstatement of the main house to its original 18th century layout. A partially buried two storey extension to the north elevation linked by a glass atrium. The extension includes a garage, lift and ground floor bedrooms (Refused)

3/2007/0392:

Extension to existing house and installation of below ground pipework for ground source heat pump (site area 1.25ha) (Refused)

3/2005/0598:

New farmyard, buildings and access. Re-submission (Approved)

3/2005/0054:

New access and farmyard and buildings. Alterations to current access and additional landscaping (Withdrawn)

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application relates to a farmstead situated in Whitewell within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. Access to the application site is from Hall Hill via a vehicular access which leads to a farmyard area. The farmyard currently accommodates an agricultural building approved in 2006 which has since been re-roofed and extended without planning permission with these unauthorised works forming the basis of this application. Cow Ark Farm (Grade II Listed) and its associated garden area lie to the South-east of the extended agricultural building with a mixture of trees, hedges and woodland encompassing the perimeter of the application site. The residential properties of Smithy Cottage (Grade II Listed) and Spring Bank House Farm lie approximately 40 and 70 metres away to the South-east and South of the application site respectively with the wider surrounding area comprising a mixture of agricultural land, woodland and open countryside.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Planning consent was granted under application 3/2005/0598 for the construction of two portal framed agricultural buildings within the application site's farmyard area to the rear of Cow Ark Farm. The Westernmost of the two consented buildings has since been constructed however this building has also since been re-roofed and extended without planning permission (circa September 2025). As such, retrospective planning consent is sought to retain the unauthorised roofing works and extension along with additional works proposed to facilitate the internal fitout of the extended building.

Principle of Development:

The proposal site lies within the open countryside. Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that proposals for development outside the Borough's defined settlement areas can be considered as justifiable if the development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.

In this instance, the application's supporting information makes reference to the farmstead at the application site as having previously accommodated a combined sheep and cattle enterprise (this is evident within the supporting documents pertaining to previous application 3/2005/0598) however it is stated that a pedigree Limousin herd was started on site in 2020 and is now one of the leading herds in the county, with sheep numbers having been reduced entirely in 2024 and with the farm now solely breeding Limousin cattle. The applicant's herd currently comprises 30 heads of cattle however it is stated that existing livestock numbers are anticipated to extend up to 50 heads of cattle in the future. It is further stated that the Westernmost building of the two buildings consented under application 3/2005/0598 constructed at the site in 2006 had previously accommodated sheep, cattle and a midden however it is understood that the roof system of this building ultimately deteriorated. In addition, it is further stated that the original building lacked the necessary space required to support the applicant's current agricultural operation with respect to calving pens, bull pens, welfare pens and space for straw and machinery storage, with the cattle system also being located outside and with bedding straw being collected weekly from a neighbour. It is stated that concerns with regards to capacity were also raised by the applicant's vet and this has been evidenced with a supporting letter provided in the application submission. In light of these issues, it is stated that a decision was made to re-roof and extend the original agricultural building so as to provide safe handling systems, improved protection against weather, improved ventilation and lighting levels, enhanced cattle welfare, security and covered storage for farmyard manure. Consequently, the applicant seeks planning consent to retain and complete construction of the unauthorised extension to the original agricultural building. Accordingly, the extension undertaken to the original agricultural building is considered to be a justifiable addition to the application site in this instance in as much that the proposed development would provide the necessary infrastructure required to support the applicant's existing agricultural operation.

In light of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would conflict with Policy DMG2 and is therefore acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of additional material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'.

Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

In this instance, the unauthorised extension to the original agricultural building on site lies approximately 50 and 70 metres away from the nearest neighbouring properties of Smithy Cottage and Spring Bank House Farm respectively therefore given the separation distance in place it is not considered that retention of the unauthorised extension would have any implications for neighbouring amenity with regards to loss of natural light or outlook. Concerns have been raised through the application's consultation process in relation to light pollution emanating from the extended farm building. The applicant has since provided further details of the internal and external lighting installed to the extended building which includes 15 programmable internal lights (it is understood that the quantity of internal lights has been reduced from 22 units due to the applicant's own concerns over potential excessive light spillage) which currently operate on an intermittent basis from 06:00 to 08:30 and from dusk to 21:00. It is further understood that the internal lamp fittings also include a discreet 10W red light which can be utilised at nighttime if required to monitor stock. External lighting is stated to be limited to four external lights (x 2 on the Northern and Southern elevations of the extended building) all of which are motion sensor operated. Consequently, given the scale of lighting and its intermittent operational nature, it is not considered that the proposed lighting scheme would be unduly harmful to the amenity of the site's nearest neighbouring receptors. Further concerns have been raised through the application's consultation process in relation to potential odour omissions from the extended building's proposed manure store. Notwithstanding this, it is understood that manure from the site is currently stored uncovered within a field and in this instance the application's supporting information states that the proposed manure store is to be fitted with a cover which in turn would significantly reduce odour omissions in comparison to the existing arrangement in place.

Taking account of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would be unduly harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents with respect to overbearing impacts or issues of noise, odour or light pollution and would therefore be compliant with the aims and objectives of Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF and Policy DMG1.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance/Impact on Heritage Assets:

Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.'

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional general design guidance as follows:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style...particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.'

With respect to development within National Landscapes (previously known as Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'

Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy provides similar guidance:

'The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.'

In this instance, the proposed extension reads as a sizeable addition to the application site with regards to its footprint and is also viewable in the public realm from Hall Hill and Clitheroe Road. In addition, concerns have been raised through the application's public consultation process with regards to the visual impact of the extension undertaken to the original building. Notwithstanding this, the boundaries of the application site consist of numerous trees, hedges and shrubs which predominantly screen the extended building, with site photo analysis showing the extended building as being only partly visible in the public realm from Hall Hill and Clitheroe Road. In addition, the extension comprises a dual pitched roof which symmetrically ties in with the gabled roof profile of the original building, with the footprints of each of the extension's gabled sections also being similar in size to the footprint of the original building and collectively serving as a natural infill to the vacant farmyard area which previously existed to the Eastern side of the original building. Furthermore, the application site benefits from an extant consent for two agricultural buildings (as approved under previous application 3/2005/0598) with a combined footprint of 565m² and in this instance the additional floorspace occupied by the extended building is not considered to be excessive in terms of size relative to the development approved under previous application 3/2005/0598. Moreover, the exterior of the extended agricultural building consists of blockwork, concrete panels, Yorkshire boarding and fibre cement roofing sheets, all of which largely reflects the design and external appearance of modern agricultural buildings within the locality and further afield. Consequently, the existing extension reads as a symmetrical and proportionate addition to the original building and application site, with the extended building appropriately assimilating into the confines of the application site and surrounding landscape.

In light of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and would therefore conserve the character of the surrounding National Landscape. The proposal would therefore satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF and Key Statement EN2 and Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy.

The extended building lies within the vicinity of three Listed Buildings which include Smithy Cottage, Cow Ark Farm and a lime kiln sited approximately 20 metres to the North of Cow Ark Bridge. In addition, concerns have been raised through the application's public consultation process with regards to the visual impact of the extension undertaken to the original building upon the significance of heritage assets located within the setting of the application site.

With regards to assessing development affecting the setting of a Listed Building, Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'

In addition, Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

'The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.'

Furthermore, Policy DME4 of the Core Strategy states:

'Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported.'

In this instance, analysis shows the extended agricultural building as being offset to the North-east of Smithy Cottage, with both buildings being set in from Hall Hill and predominately screened behind existing vegetation. Consequently, the extended building is not read directly in concert with the

adjacent heritage asset. The extended agricultural building lies within close proximity to Cow Ark Farm however the Easternmost section of the extended building is primarily read in concert with the modern timber based extension to the rear of the listed farmhouse when viewing the site from Clitheroe Road and as such does not detract from the significance of the historic farmhouse which is largely derived from the farmhouse's principal elevation. In a similar vein, only the Easternmost section of the extended building is read in the context of the listed lime kiln and this linkage is largely subdued by virtue of the separation distance in place between the extended building and lime kiln feature.

Consequently, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any undue impact upon the setting of the Listed Buildings located within the vicinity of the application site. The proposed development would therefore satisfy the requirements of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking:

The proposed development has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways who have raised no objections to the proposed development with respect to access, parking or general highway safety. Concerns have been raised through the application's public consultation process in relation to potential highway safety implications arising from surface water runoff from the extended building. The applicant has since provided further details pertaining to the management of surface water runoff from the site (in addition to the surface water drainage strategy originally submitted with the application) and in light of the information provided it is not considered that the proposed development would unduly compromise the existing highway infrastructure within the vicinity of the application site. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any undue impacts upon highway safety as such the proposal satisfies Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy (highways).

Landscape/Ecology:

Protected Sites

Analysis shows that no SSSI sites fall within the 500 metre air pollution screening distance (as stipulated by Natural England) applicable to the site's manure storage capacity (under 250 tonnes) and building extension footprint (under 500m² floorspace). Consequently, the proposed development does not raise any concerns with regards to its impact upon protected sites of ecological interest.

Protected species

Concerns have been raised through the application's public consultation process in relation to light pollution from the proposed development and the potential impacts of this upon local wildlife however as previously conveyed, the proposed lighting scheme is not considered to be excessive in terms of scale and would be operated on an intermittent basis. As such, it is not considered that the proposed development would be unduly harmful to protected species.

Diffuse pollution to watercourses

Concerns have been raised through the application's public consultation process in relation to potential occurrences of pollution to Cow Ark Brook, with these concerns being centred around the storage capacity of the manure store and dirty water holding tank being proposed to serve the extended building. The applicant has since provided further detailed information with regards to anticipated volumes of manure and dirty water arising from the proposed development along with details of the storage capacities of the manure store and dirty water holding tank, and the ability of this infrastructure to handle the anticipated volumes of manure and dirty water. The submitted information also includes detailed strategies for managing manure and dirty water production. These details have been assessed and are

considered to sufficiently address any concerns with respect to potential occurrences of water pollution. Consequently, the proposed development raises no measurable concerns with regards to its impact upon the ecology of the area, subject to compliance with the aforementioned details submitted by the applicant which has been imposed by way of a condition.

BNG

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it forms the basis of retrospective development and is also subject to the de minimis exception.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposed development would be utilised in relation to an existing agricultural operation and as such would be wholly compliant with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG2.

The proposed development would not be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents, nor would the works proposed result in any harm to the visual amenities of the area or setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings located within the vicinity of the application site. Furthermore, the proposal raises no issues with respect to impacts upon highway safety or the ecology of the area.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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